



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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NEWS RELEASE**

CONTACT: Gail Pinsker
310.450.8338, ext. 70230
gpinsker@smmusd.org

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SMMUSD to Launch Project-Based Learning Program
Parent Information Sessions Planned

Project-based learning (PBL) is coming to the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District for the 2019-20 school year with the first cohort of 100 ninth grade students starting a four-year program. The Board of Education approved this exciting education model following parent and community engagement sessions, visits to schools with successful PBL programs and several board meeting discussions.

Parents of current eighth grade students from Lincoln Middle School, John Adams Middle School, SMASH and Malibu Middle School, along with others living in the SMMUSD boundaries, are invited to an information session about the new program. Parents may attend any session:

- **March 11: Malibu High School**, 5-6 p.m. Room C19 on the Cabrillo campus - 30237 Morning View Dr.
- **March 12: John Adams Middle School**, 5-6 p.m. 2425 16th St., Library
- **March 19: Lincoln Middle School**, 5-6 p.m. 1501 California Ave., Cafeteria

Parents of students in all grades are also welcome to attend, along with community members, to learn more about this innovative program.

PBL is an authentic learning experience achieved through deep engagement with high interest, relevant, real-world, curriculum-related projects over an extended period of time. Students then demonstrate their knowledge and skills through a public product or presentation. It is often interdisciplinary and / or interest-based with differentiation existing in instruction, demonstration and content.

The four-year rollout includes the PBL freshman cohort in the first year, along with the development of specialized career learning pathways. An interest-based learning (Capstone) model will be added in year three to serve additional juniors and seniors.

Interested families of current eighth grade students from SMMUSD middle schools and others living within the SMMUSD boundaries may apply for a coveted spot. SMMUSD seeks to have balanced representation from the middle schools and will ensure a minimum 26 percent of SED and / or English Learners.

The district's objective is for all students to graduate ready for college and careers from schools that are safe, socially responsible and academically rigorous. This is accomplished through a self-reflective, shared system of accountability that consistently uses culturally relevant best practices to maximize equitable student outcomes. The PBL program is another avenue for our students to meet their goals.

The program is designed to serve students of all abilities, interests, aspirations, and socio-economic backgrounds. Because of the individualized approach, this model can successfully meet the needs of all students, from the most vulnerable to the highest achieving.

"We are very excited to bring this proven successful program to SMMUSD students this fall," Superintendent Dr. Ben Drati said. "The district continues to expand opportunities for students to meet their full potential, while also aligned with district goals established by the school board."

As part of the PBL plan development, staff will boost parent engagement and address equity and achievement gaps.

Parents attending an information meeting will learn about project-based learning, curriculum, rollout plan, location of the program, application process and deadlines, availability of electives, and extracurricular activities.

Additionally, brochures and website information will be available through all SMMUSD middle schools by mid-March.

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SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
1651 16TH Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404
ph: 310.450.8338; fax: 310.581.1138
www.smmusd.org Follow us on Twitter: @SMMUSD